

Message Text

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S/PRS:J.KING

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TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: ASSOCIATED PRESS ARTICLE ON US-FRENCH RELATIONS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AP ARTICLE ON US-FRENCH RELATIONS

FILED MARCH 23 FROM WASHINGTON:

2. QUOTE US-FRANCE BY KENNETH J. FREED WASHINGTON (AP) --

FRANCE TRIED TO PERSUADE ARAB STATES NOT TO LIFT THE OIL
EMBARGO AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN OFFICIALS SAID
TODAY.

OFFICIALS OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, PERHAPS INCLUDING FOR-
EIGN MINISTER MICHEL JOBERT, WERE DESCRIBED AS TELLING SYRIA
IN LATE JANUARY THAT LIFTING THE EMBARGO COULD HURT THE
ARAB CAUSE AGAINST ISRAEL.

STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES SAID THERE IS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE
THAT JOBERT PERSONALLY GAVE THIS ADVICE, BUT THEY
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ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SUCH POSSIBILITY WAS NOT RULED OUT.

IN ANY EVENT, THE SOURCES SAID RESPONSIBLE FRENCH OFFICIALS DEFINITELY ATTEMPTED TO INFLUENCE SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB STATES TO CONTINUE THE EMBARGO BEGUN DURING THE OCTOBER MIDDLE EAST WAR.

THE U.S. OFFICIALS SAID THE FRENCH ACTION, WHICH ULTIMATELY FAILED, WAS ONE OF THE REASONS THAT SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER AND PRESIDENT NIXON DECIDED RECENTLY TO LASH OUT AGAINST THE EUROPEAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

THE TWO AMERICAN LEADERS STRONGLY CRITICIZED EUROPE DIRECTLY AND FRANCE INDIRECTLY FOR FAILURE TO COOPERATE ON ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MATTERS AS WELL AS ON SECURITY AFFAIRS.

A MAIN CAUSE OF THE U.S. DISSATISFACTION WAS THE INCREASINGLY INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN ATTITUDE, LED BY PARIS, IN DEALING WITH THE ARABS AND THE OIL SUPPLY.

A LACK OF A UNIFIED WESTERN POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND OIL WAS SEEN AS A THREAT TO THE KISSINGER EFFORT TO ARRANGE AN ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE.

THE FRENCH ACTIONS AGAINST LIFTING THE EMBARGO IS SEEN AS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THIS, THE U.S. OFFICIALS SAID.

IT ALSO WAS DESCRIBED AS AN OBVIOUS EFFORT BY PARIS TO STRENGTHEN FRENCH INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO INSURE THE FUTURE SUPPLY OF ARAB OIL TO FRANCE.

WHILE THE FRENCH STRATEGY FAILED IN KEEPING ARAB OIL FROM THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE WAS ABLE TO ENGINEER AN OFFER BY THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC TIES TO THE ARABS IN EXCHANGE FOR A CONTINUING SUPPLY OF OIL.

NO DIRECT U.S. PROTEST WAS MADE TO FRANCE, BUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THE NIXON-KISSINGER STATEMENTS UNCLASSIFIED

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OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS SERVED A SIMILAR PURPOSE.

THE AMERICAN COUNTER-ATTACK MAY BE WORKING. THE U.S. SOURCES POINTED TO RECENT CONCILIATORY STATEMENTS BY JOBERT AS EXAMPLES. UNQUOTE. RUSH

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